

Message Text

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PAGE 01 TUNIS 00824 121613Z

43

ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03

SS-20 USIA-15 SAM-01 DRC-01 /123 W

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R 121500Z FEB 74

FM AMEMBASSY TUNIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4469

INFO USINT ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY RABAT 3432

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

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EO 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, TS, LY

SUBJ: LOCAL PRESS CRITIZES QADHAFI SPEECH OF FEB 10

REF: (A) TUNIS 804, (B) TUNIS 735

1. EDITORIALS ALL FOUR LOCAL DAILIES FEB 12 DEVOTED TO HARSH CRITICISM OF PRESIDENT QADHAFI'S SPEECH OF FEB 10. (NO DAILIES PUBLISH ON MONDAY. WE HAVE NOT STEN TEXT OF SPEECH AND WOULD APPRECIATE FBIS TEXT IF AVAILABLE.)

2. STRONGEST OF FOUR WAS SIGNED ARTICLE IN PARTY ARABIC

DAILY AL

AMAL BY MUSTAPHA FILALI, MEMBER OF PSD POLITICAL BUREAU, WHO CRITICIZES QADHAFI FOR VENTING HIS ANGER ON TUNISIAN RESPECT FOR CONSTITUTION, DIGNITY OF TUNISIA, AND VITURE OF ITS WOMEN. HE SASID THAT QUDHAFI IN HIS

SPEECH ON FEB 10V HAD CRITIZED "ENEMIES OF UNION" WHO SEEK FALSE PRETEXTS TO EXPLAIN FAILURE OF UNION, "PRETENDING"

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PAGE 02 TUNIS 00824 121613Z

THEY HAVE ATTAINED SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT WHICH LIYBANS DO NOT

YET HAVE AND THAT THEIR WOMEN HAVE BEEN PROMOTED TO LEVEL WHICH LIBYAN WOMAN DOES NOT YET KNOW. HE SAID QADHAFI'S RESPONSE TO THIS WAS "THAT PROGRESS OF WOMEN IN THESE COUNTRIES MEANS THAT THEY OFFER THEIR WIVES AND THEIR DAUGHTERS TO THE TOURISTS". THIS STATEMENT, ACCORDING TO FILALI, WAS REPEATED SEVERAL TIMES DURING THE SPEECH, WHICH WAS REBROADCASTED LATER SAME EVENING. FILALI SAID THESE STATEMENTS CANNOT SERVE UNION AND THEY CONSTITUTE A FLAGRANT ERROR ON PART OF LIBYAN LEADER IN HIS ATTEMPT TO GAIN SYMPATHY OF TUNISIAN PEOPLE.

GEM WHEREABOUT OF FORMER FOMIN MASMOUDI STILL UNCLEAR, ALTHOUGH REPORTS NOW INDICATE HE MAY BE IN PARIS. HIS CONTINUED ABSENCE FROM TUNISIA WOULD NOT PREVENT "COMMISSION OF INQUIRY" FROM PREPARING REPORT ON HIS DISREGARD FOR PARTY DISCIPLINE AND CONDUCT INCOMPATIBLE WITH POLICIES OF PRESIDENT BOURGUIBA, PSD AND GOVERNMENT. SUCH A REPORT COULD LEAD TO HIS EXPULSION FROM PSD AND NATIONAL ASSEMBLY.

4. COMMENT: QADHAFI'S SPEECH MAY HAVE SOUNDED OPENING GUN IN WAR OF WORDS BETWEEN LIBYA AND TUNISIA, DESPITE FACT

THAT TUNISIAN EDITORIALS SAY THEY NOT INTERESTED IN ENGAGING IN POLEMICS. SO FAR GOT MEDIA IS IGNORING QADHAFI'S REPORTED CALL FOR POPULAR REVOLUTION AND OFFER OF LIBYAN ASSISTANCE TO TRAIN LEADERS FOR SUCH REVOLUTIONS AND IS REACTING MAINLY TO QADHAFI'S ATTACK ON MORALITY OF TUNISIAN WOMEN. QADHAFI'S CRITICAL SPEECH HAS OFFERED GOT OPPORTUNITY TO USE MEDIA AND PUBLIC MEETINGS TO DENIGRATE QADHAFI IN EFFORT KILL ANY REMAINING PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR UNION. COMMISSION OF INQUIRY ON MASMOUDI MAY BE ANOTHER FACET IN THIS POLICY TO SERVE NOTICE TO PSD OFFICIALS NOT TO SUPPORT UNION.

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